

More Francis Befuddlement

Does God will false religions?

Faithful Catholics want to know what Catholic sense can be made of a document Pope Francis signed Monday proclaiming that God somehow wills the diversity of religions.

On his trip to the United Arab Emirates this week, the Pope signed the document on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.”

A section troubling to Catholics reads:

Freedom is a right of every person: each individual enjoys the freedom of belief, thought, expression and action. The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings. This divine wisdom is the source from which the right to freedom of belief and the freedom to be different derives.

Saying God wills a “diversity of religions” can only be rightly understood as talking about what’s called God’s permissive will. God does allow evil in order to bring forth a higher good such as when the devil had to ask God for permission to tempt Job.

Job 2:6-7 reads, “And the Lord said to Satan: Behold he is in thy hand, but yet save his life. So Satan went forth from the presence Of the Lord, and struck Job with a very grievous ulcer.”

The evil of false religions is also tolerated by God, Who does not violate man’s free will even when they make a mistake in fulfilling His demand to seek Him. A professor at Catholic University of America, Dr. Chad Pecknold, explains:

It is puzzling and potentially problematic, but in the context of the document, the Holy Father is clearly referring not to the evil of many false religions, but positively refers to the diversity of religions only in the sense that they are evidence of our natural desire to know God. God wills that all men come to know Him through the free choice of their will, and so it follows that a diversity of religions can be spoken about as permissively willed by God without denying the supernatural good of one true religion.

Popular priest blogger Fr. John Zuhlsdorf speaks in similar terms:

If you read the statement to mean that by God's positive or active will there are a multiplicity of religions, that's an error. That would impute to God the active willing of false religions and, therefore, evil, which is impossible and contrary to reason. God cannot positively will evil. God can only, by His nature, permissively will evil. I don't know what the writers of the document intended. I'm just telling the truth about what is written.

Watch the panel discuss the Catholic meaning underlying a troubling document in The Download—More Francis Befuddlement.

Source: <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/more-francis-befuddlement>

[Disclaimer]